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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the personalized video tape feedback component as developed by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas at Austin. The component was developed to facilitate self-discovery and individualized pacing in the selection of learning experiences and to encourage increasingly independent, self-correcting thought and professional action. The document describes the method that gives personalized feedback to student teachers with videotape recordings. The following aspects of the feedback process are discussed in detail: a) the "claiming of self" phenomenon; b) the nomination of focus problem; c) the facilitation-confrontation dilemma; d) evaluation-feedback discrimination; and e) role transition challenges for feedback practitioners. (JA)

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Training of Student Teachers Through Personalized Videotape Feedback

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Personalized videotape feedback, in the form to be described here, is one component of a highly integrated training system for prospective teachers developed by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. This system has been described elsewhere (Butts et al., 1970; Chase & Peck, 1970; Fuller, 1970, 1972; Peck, 1970) but some understanding of the programmatic context in which such feedback is offered is necessary to the comprehension of the training model which this form of feedback partially implements as well as of its relationship to other implementing procedures and processes.

At one level of description, the Personalized Teacher Education Program was designed to implement a model of teacher education which is heavily developmental. Briefly, this means that the program is explicitly designed to take into account, and facilitate growth and learning in, the prospective teacher's intra-personal characteristics, congruence and comfort, her interpersonal authenticity, skills and impact, and the breadth and flexibility of her repertoire of professional skills. It follows that it is a highly individualized system intentionally designed to produce integrated but idiosyncratic graduates rather than a standardized and monolithic set of competencies.

Optimal implementation of such a system is a goal toward which we continually strive with considerable assurance that we will never quite reach it and that no particular set of implementing procedures represents the final or best answers.

Our experience over fifteen years of implementation effort in our own institution, and more recently in adopting institutions across the country, suggest the following set of components as a gradually achievable and comparatively effective implementation structure:

1. The blocking of time and courses so that students are engaged full-time in their professional training over two semesters.

2. Inter-disciplinary faculty teaming to assure maximum integration of course content across disciplines and of college-based and school-based learning experiences; additionally to assure the greatest possible acquaintance with each student by all faculty involved in his training and full sharing among faculty of increasing awareness of students' learning and experiential needs and progress.

3. Early, continuous and progressively responsible involvement of the student in public school classrooms selected and developed as fully as possible to provide for the individual learning needs of the student.

4. Provision of maximum feedback to each student regarding his teaching-related personal characteristics (personal assessment feedback), his projection of himself into, and behavioral enactment of, the teaching role (videotape feedback and continuing feedback based on direct observation by teacher educators, cooperating teachers and pupils) focusing as appropriate on the intra-personal, interpersonal and professional skill facets of his performance.

5. Provision of viable alternatives for the acquisition of knowledge, management and instructional skills, and teaching experience in accordance with the student's readiness and perceived discrepancies between actual and desired performance, impact, and resulting satisfaction.

The combining of these components into an integrated system provides a learning climate in which each component and procedure has measurable effects of its own along with synergistic effects on other components. Our research and evaluation evidence corroborates this cumulative effects hypothesis and suggests that this whole is indeed more than the sum of its separate parts (Borich et al., 1974; Fuller et al., 1969; Haak, 1973; Menaker et al., 1973).

With this context in mind, it is possible to focus on what we call personalized videotape feedback as it is operationalized in the array of supportive procedures and processes, all of which grow out of a single model of teacher education. This model has been explicated elsewhere (Fuller, 1974).

There are obviously a number of conceptual models and bases out of which various forms of videotape feedback arise in current practice (e.g., Fuller et al., 1973). Wide variations result in the feedback process, instructor-student relationships, and goals. Videotape feedback may become a tool for behavior modification, for skill or competency training, for psychodynamic diagnosis and treatment, for classroom interaction analysis and modification, for evaluation, and for various combinations thereof.

Personalized videotape feedback can hardly be described as a simple feedback system conceptually or operationally. It attempts to take into account the idiosyncratic nature of the student and of the behavioral and teaching style goals which he sets for himself. It attempts to motivate the naturalistic development of the student through progressively challenging experience rather than setting fixed behavioral and instructional goals. It attempts to meet the student as he is and where he is which may confront the student with either congruence or dissonance between his own goals and his own performance and his own view or perspective on that performance and its impact.

Personalized videotape feedback has evolved not only from a conceptual model of teacher education but also with due cognizance of research results in teacher education and other related fields. While a certain degree of consensus on some aspects of videotape feedback in selected settings with particular populations and procedures emerges from the literature (Fuller, 1973; Fuller, Baker & Manning, 1972; Fuller & Manning, 1973), much more research is obviously needed to support, modify or eliminate current practices, including our own.

The preceding introduction to the conceptual and research bases of personalized videotape feedback and the programmatic context in which it serves as a synergistic component has served to emphasize the importance we attach to an integrated system of teacher preparation as opposed to a collection of courses, requirements or other pieces. It should be noted, however, that personalized videotape feedback has been used effectively in teacher preparation programs which are unrelated to the Personalized Teacher Education Program but which have some goals and procedures in common.

Out of many years of experience in using sound movie and videotape feedback with successive groups of prospective teachers, a number of salient elements which recur frequently in the process can be identified. The major purpose of this paper is to discuss briefly some of these aspects of the feedback process from the vantage point of the practitioner.

1. The "Claiming of Self" Phenomenon

One of the very powerful effects of seeing oneself on videotape is the shock -- in one degree or another -- of seeing oneself from the vantage point of a second person. This shock is likely to be less if the person has had

previous experience in being taped or filmed and has been able to assimilate this second-person view of himself. Prospective teachers engaged in their very early enactments of the teaching "role" are often startled by the way they sound and look and "come through" in spite of previous experience in being filmed in other contexts. When this new perspective is really striking for the student, he may have real difficulty initially in claiming the image on the tape as himself even as he tells himself intellectually that it has to be true. Students often signal this reaction by statements such as, "That can't be me -- you must have the tapes mixed up," or "The camera must have been at a peculiar angle."

This effect is one which we feel is highly important for the person offering feedback to understand and to provide for in the feedback process itself. It can easily be discounted or pushed aside entirely by retorts such as "Oh sure, most students feel that way initially, but it will go away." Reports from other settings (e.g., Cornelison & Arsenian, 1960; Danet, 1968; Geertsma & Reivich, 1965; Holzman, 1969; Kagan & Krathwohl, 1967; Moore, Chernell & West, 1965; Stoller, 1968) on subjects who are generally less secure and functional than prospective teachers indicate that the threat connected with being videotaped and in being "forced" to view the results can be so great that the subject physically avoids the camera, refuses to speak or act, refuses to look at the playback, and occasionally becomes withdrawn and disoriented. Reactions from prospective teachers are typically less severe, but they do exist very commonly (e.g., Breen & Diehl, 1970; Perlberg et al., 1971; Watts, 1973). As the image on the screen is gradually "claimed" the student may say, "Now I see what my mother has been trying to tell me all my life," or "God help us all! I come through just like the teachers I've resented and swore I'd never be like."

When feedback assists the student to claim himself -- from a new perspective -- the student has access to a new source of data about himself which can become an invaluable catalyst and tool for subsequent learning. One important implication of this aspect of the feedback process, which is mildly in conflict with some of the research literature, is that too much focus on specific behaviors and objectives early in the feedback process can effectively ignore or rule out of order the student's view of himself as a total, functioning professional. As will be pointed out below, full opportunity to explore this acceptance domain often leads to the student's identification of discrepancies between the way he thought he performed and the way he subsequently viewed that performance on videotape which in turn becomes a potent source of nominations of both general teaching style and specific behaviors which the student is most highly motivated to change. Dr. Hunt's paper in this session (Hunt, 1974) has explicated the rationale for the use of self-nomination in determining the focus for improvement of teacher performance.

2. The Nomination of Focus Problem

Students typically anticipate that videotape feedback is little more than a modernized form of observation and critiquing of their teaching performance. The assumption is frequently built into this conception that the supervisor's value judgments regarding what constitutes good or ideal or minimally acceptable performance is the major criterion which will be applied to their effort. If they have been able to read the supervisor's mind (a highly developed survival skill in many students), and can make their teaching behavior conform to their reading -- at least for a short period -- then they should receive the usual pat on the head and an A in the course. The conversion of this essentially

deadly passive-dependent approach rather than its unwitting perpetuation is one of the basic challenges which effective videotape feedback must face. If the atmosphere generated during the feedback session is characterized by mutual and increasing openness, directness, and respect, we find that students can be perceptively and constructively self-critical. Given effective interaction, the self-criticism generated by discrepancies between the way the student performed and the way he would like to perform readily evolves into a manageable number of specific foci around which the student is internally motivated to concentrate his learning and his subsequent experience. This does not mean that the supervisor becomes an empty-headed, formless, valueless creature abandoning the student to his own devices. As the student learns that his own concerns are important guides to his own motivation to change rather than shameful give-aways of his inadequacy and weakness, he is likely to become open to active and discriminating use of the supervisor's perception of the student's performance as well as his experience and expertise. Self-nomination of focus is not magic in itself. We believe it is an important part of the process of a student's becoming a continuing learner rather than a finished product who has met and maintains in repetitive fashion the minimal standards set by others.

3. The Facilitation-Confrontation Dilemma

The consensus of research on videotape feedback suggests that feedback is most effective when it is both facilitative and confrontive. Our own experience would support this dual, and sometimes paradoxical, conslusion. The focus on the student's developing awareness of himself and his teaching behavior and impact is a facilitating element, in our judgment. The encouragement provided in the feedback interaction for the student to explore and clarify

the array of events occurring in his "inner" and "outer" worlds which are most striking or salient for him is another part of facilitation. The quiet support of the student's assumption of increased responsibility for his own learning is yet another.

Confrontation also occurs in the feedback process as a preface or as an interwoven part of these and other facilitative processes. Being videotaped while teaching is experienced as a kind of confrontation by most novice teachers (and by a good many seasoned ones -- including teacher educators -- as well). Viewing the tape later in the presence of one or more others who count is almost always an anxiety-producing, confronting experience in some degree. Indeed, an important part of the artistry of effective feedback lies in the skill of the supervisor in inviting and accepting the student's expressions of apprehension, anxiety and distress while developing and maintaining a relationship which keeps these reactions within tolerable limits where they can serve as motivators rather than disruptors of present and subsequent learning. These general confrontational elements are vital in effective feedback because they are so directly linked to the student's motivation for change, for increased competence and increased satisfaction in the teaching relationship.

Another form of confrontation occurs within the feedback interaction itself. Some of this arises in what may be generally described as self-confrontation. That is, the student becomes aware of discrepancies between his performance as he experienced and recollects it, his own perception of that performance when he subsequently views it and between both of these perceptions and his own goals. Self confrontation within an authentic human relationship provides a large part of the motive power, the focus, the direction and the impact of effective feedback.

Another form of confrontation arises from the perceptions of the supervisor of the student's performance and his explicit and implicit goals. His perceptions may be highly congruent or incongruent with the student's perceptions. Incongruent perceptions represent another kind of discrepancy and another source of confrontation. Many perceptions of this kind are related simply to the very different vantage points from which the student and the supervisor are viewing the student's performance. The supervisor is often much more aware of facets of the student's behavior and its immediate impact on pupils than the student who was so much caught up in the experience and in "reliving" it while watching the tape that important and often obvious details escape his attention. Effective feedback demands the pointing up of such observations by the supervisor, particularly where the student's behavior is educationally significant, remediable, and related to the student's own level and focus of concern about his teaching and its effects. Assuming an adequate feedback relationship, these kinds of observations are likely to be received as new information by the student -- or different and interesting perspectives on his current style of operation. An example of this kind of observation is when the supervisor says, "Did you notice that you called on several girls in this segment but on none of the boys?" The student replies, "No, I didn't, not at the time and not when we watched it just now. That's surprising, but thinking back, I suspect you're right. And I think I may know part of the reason."

This aspect of feedback involves instructional, tutorial and consultative skills which are quite familiar to supervisors and teacher educators generally who individualize instruction and work in close proximity to the student's school-based experiences. It has greatest impact, we believe, when it is directed to areas of real concern to the student.

Another distinguishable form of confrontation may occur when student and supervisor perceive a teaching incident in a very similar way but disagree strongly on its long- or short-term effect on the teacher and/or the pupils. Educational values are extensions of personal values and usually reside somewhere near the bedrock of a functioning personality. Value conflicts do occur between supervisor and student. They are generally neither comfortable nor easily resolved. There is a commitment in personalized feedback to face such issues openly with compassion, humility and patience. It is beyond the scope of this paper to delineate the process involved.

Frequently, value conflict per se is not the issue in confrontation. At a broad, philosophical level, supervisors and students usually share many values commonly. More often, the confrontation occurs around the way in which the student has implemented a value-based immediate goal in a particular classroom situation. In that very real world, the student is keenly aware of the constraints imposed in his perception by the school, the cooperating teacher, the supervisor, the nature of the pupils and the novice status of the student -- constraints which are not likely to coexist in perfect harmony. The student's perception of such constraints is rarely unrooted in reality, but such realities are rarely as inflexible or powerful as the student perceives them to be. The student's response to confrontation is this area is often, "I see what you mean, but, of course, I won't teach like this when I have my own classroom!" If training is to be more than a hazing experience, it is extremely important that the student begin to explore the alternatives which are open to him within the reality constraints which exist -- and which will continue to exist in one form or another as long as he teaches and as long as he lives. Effective confrontation here can spawn the gradual emergence of adult responsibility, independence and

potency as a replacement for helpless conformity with compensatory fantasies of omnipotence.

4. The Evaluation - Feedback Discrimination

The distinction between evaluation and feedback seems to be crucial, in our experience, not primarily at a semantic level, but rather in the perception and interactional experiences of both student and supervisor.

For many understandable reasons, students are likely to view the process of being videotaped and viewing and discussing the tapes as an evaluation of their performance, by whatever name it's called and regardless of how benign, supportive and non-threatening its introduction has been. Their anticipations of the feedback session are likely to be built on their many past experiences in being evaluated and the way they feel about them. Students use polite and sophisticated language to describe or justify the evaluation experience, but a great many of them feel, "This is the time when the supervisor will tell me what I did wrong."

Supervisors have their own conceptual and emotional problems on their side of the feedback relationship. They want to be helpful and constructive. Moreover, they usually want to be liked and trusted. At the same time, they can't leave their brains or value systems or critical capacities outside the door of the feedback room. Their greatest fear is often expressed in the form of, "What can I do if the student's performance is impossibly bad?"

We do not have a formula for dealing with this problem. It lies close to the heart of the dynamics which enter and influence many human relationships. Self-exposure is an essential ingredient in learning and change and yet it is frequently threatening to one's present sense of well-being. It is well and

important to note that most students manifest some previously unrecognized strengths in their early teaching attempts, and effective feedback will focus on these and assist students to build on them rather than taking them for granted.

The distinction between the kind of experience which is viewed as constructive and motivating feedback rather than discouraging and inhibiting evaluation does not lie exclusively in the accentuation of the positive. It seems to be more in the time frame on which the supervisor focuses, largely in an attitudinal sense. The videotape confronts the student with his performance which is now past. There is nothing he can do to change it apart from explaining, rationalizing or denying it. If the student, with or without the aid of the supervisor, adopts this view of the feedback experience, then subsequent training experience is likely to be entered with the view of overcoming or living down a former "unacceptable" (i.e., negatively evaluated) performance or maintaining or repeating an acceptable one. While both of these motivations may be one part of the outcome of feedback with most students, they are likely to be constrictive if they are the primary outcome.

If the time frame focus is shifted from past to future -- a considerably greater challenge than the mere shifting of verb tense -- the videotaped performance becomes primarily a springboard which launches the student into subsequent training experience with a clearer notion of how he wants to shape it and open himself to it. This shift in perception appears to be central in the student's perceiving the videotape discussion as informative, provocative, constructive feedback rather than as threatening, punitive evaluation. This is not accomplished through a verbal declaration of intent by the supervisor.

It is ineffectively articulated by such admonitions as, "I'm sure you can do better if you just try harder." It may be conveyed partly by the supervisor's recognition that teaching is touch and complicated and demanding. A problem or an impasse represented on the tape can be viewed not as an unfortunate incident which should have been avoided but as a "cat to be skinned" if the supervisor and student can get their heads and ingenuity together.

It is further articulated when the confrontation occurs around teaching issues which are of intrinsic concern to the student, when the discrepancy between actual and desired performance is not so great as to be disheartening and when the supervisor and student can join in a search for practical, specific, incremental actions which the student can initiate in facing and dealing with the problem.

5. Role Transition Challenges for Feedback Practitioners

The Personalized Teacher Education Program has employed an arrangement for videotape feedback which provides two members of the faculty team in each feedback session. One member is the curriculum and instruction specialist, and in early feedback sessions particularly, is the team member responsible for supervision of the student's in-school observation-participation experience. Later the curriculum specialist may be a special methods instructor or the student teaching supervisor. The second member of the feedback team is the counseling psychologist who was responsible for the assessment feedback previously offered to the student, for continuing consultation with the student in his or her school assignment and frequently the student's instructor in psychological foundations. This arrangement has been a powerful catalyst in the implementation of the program in several ways:

1. The student is brought into contact with a broader array of perspectives and expertise than is likely to be present in any single member of the team.

2. The feedback session usually reveals in salient form the particular concerns, problems and strengths which each student is experiencing and where the student is in recognizing and dealing with them. This direct information is then available to each of the team members in their subsequent separate contacts with the student and more easily accessible to other team members responsible for other aspects of the student's training.

3. Repeated experiences in joint feedback usually become a powerful learning experience to the team members themselves. Exposure before one's colleagues, the surfacing of quite different perceptions of the same performance and the sometimes different and sometimes conflicting notions of what the student might do to improve his performance are only a few of the uncomfortable but challenging processes with which the co-feedbackers must learn to cope.

While we believe this arrangement has much to offer to the development of real communication among faculty and of a program which is integrated on something more than paper, we realize that it is impractical in many situations. Our training materials in videotape feedback (Newlove et al., 1974) are adapted for those situations in which a single member of the faculty or team participates in the feedback session. We will touch briefly upon the role transition problems of both psychologist and curriculum "types" who engage in videotape feedback.

Curriculum and instruction specialists who become interested in videotape feedback as a training strategy frequently have had experience in student

teaching supervision. While supervisory responsibility and practices vary considerably from place to place, it has usually involved some observation of the student teacher in action and some degree of individual supervisory interaction. To this extent, videotape feedback places the teacher educator in a role which approximates a familiar interactional situation. It is likely to be experienced progressively as different in several important respects. Following a period of observation, the student is likely to meet the supervisor "to get the verdict." In the supervisor's judgment did the student do well or poorly? Did he pass or fail? Is there a specific suggestion or two about what the student might do to improve based on the supervisor's overall impression or on two or three incidents which happened to strike his eye? As soon as a videotape is introduced the data available are effectively increased substantially. The performance is re-lived, in a sense, by the student. He may notice many things that he said or did that escaped his attention when he was caught up in the experience. Viewing it is likely to stimulate many of the feelings he had which can now be noted and explored. The teacher educator, too, is likely to have many more specific perceptions during playback when he is more focused on the student and can reflect upon the experience rather than "watching it go by." The analytic power of the supervisor has far more stimulation and space to operate, and because the student is more loaded with perceptions and reactions, the supervisor's interactional power must also increase if he is to help the student deal with all that the tape evokes. One supervisor expressed this difference by saying that when he observed, he was restricted to noting whether the car was on the road and in motion or bogged down. In contrast, seeing a videotape is like watching the intricate workings of several clocks all at once.

A second related, and often more difficult, transition for the supervisor frequently occurs in the domain of intimacy. It is relatively easy to contain conventional supervision to those aspects of the student's teaching behavior which are consciously intended, public, and often pre-identified as behavioral, managerial or instructional objectives considered appropriate to the student's level of training. This delimited focus may essentially render other aspects of the student's performance irrelevant, unavoidable "noise in the system" which must be largely ignored to concentrate on specific behaviors or competencies. In personalized feedback, the "noise" often becomes the principal interactional focus when it is of real concern to the student and in important manifestation of where he is in the process of learning to teach. His feelings, motives, interactional patterns are likely to surface, often around the edges of what he is attempting to do. Such reactions, intentions, and effects very frequently replicate the student's behavior in non-teaching situations, past and present, and the search for understanding of the student's present coping mechanisms and the viable alternatives leading to constructive change may lead to aspects of the student's life far removed from the immediate teaching situation.

The supervisor often reacts to this broadened interaction with trepidation. He may protest that he is unqualified in this domain while at the same time acknowledging that the student's attitudes and feelings are having major impact on his or her effectiveness. He may feel uncomfortable as the student's opening up invites him to draw on his full range of human experience in interacting rather than on his well-developed corner of specialized expertise.

The supervisory role we propose is a difficult and demanding one. It is unpredictable and exciting. We believe that it is a highly relevant and potent and fulfilling role as do most supervisors who have made the transition.

The counseling psychologist's role in the Personalized Teacher Education Program is also effectively achieved through a process of transition. He usually starts with competence and comfort in one-to-one interaction. He is well versed in the subtleties of personality, motivational and interactional dynamics and is skillful in some degree in developing a climate and an interactional process which has growth and learning potential for the student. As he moves from a conventional counseling setting, he faces a number of differences in his role functioning. His clients are no longer volunteers who came to him seeking help for problems which have been identified to some degree. Rather, he sees all students assigned to him, most of whom are functioning relatively well. In his conventional role, it is easy for him to become oriented toward pathology, problems, ineffective coping mechanisms and life styles. Now he finds himself dealing with relatively healthy individuals at a time when they are emerging into adult roles in a setting which can be managed to provide support and challenge for the development of constructive, creative and self-fulfilling coping and relating styles. The counselor's experience in problem finding and solving can serve him well in this new role, but it may take some time for him to develop competence and confidence in addressing himself to the strengths and budding positive capacities of those he attempts to serve.

Counselors are frequently poorly informed about the realities of the public schools and the process through which the student teacher is inducted. He is often unaware of the sometimes conflicting expectations and pressures from college and school-based supervisors and from pupils as the student begins to function in an essentially new role in this strange and sometimes frightening new world. In his search for clarity, he may be inclined to attribute full responsibility for the student's confusion or anxiety or ineptness on some specific psychological malfunction within the student. Often the truth lies closer

to the probability that if the student isn't confused, he doesn't understand the situation. Direct exposure and experience with the school and with commonalities in the experience of many students in relating to it is the best cure for this kind of functional blindness with which many counselor types, moving into this new role, come marvelously equipped.

Finally, the counselor faces many challenges in connection with the extension of his role functioning in the Personalized Teacher Education Program. He spends less time in his office with his pre-arranged schedule of 50-minute appointments and more time in a variety of contacts in the real world of college and school. Videotape feedback is only one such extended contact, representing as it does, exposure of the counselor to the student's school experience, to a collaborative relationship with the curriculum team member and the beginning of subsequent contacts with the student in action and with the several members of the team who are working toward working together in providing the richest and most individually appropriate and challenging climate for student learning.

We have touched briefly on certain processes which occur in personalized videotape feedback largely from the standpoint of the challenges they pose for teacher educators who see this training procedure, in part, as an opportunity to extend their role functioning and impact. We do not pretend that the role we advocate is easy or simple. For most of us, it requires new risks, new exposure and considerable floundering. But the water is fine and most envigorating.

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